managed down to a single port. For example, there can be three ports, each port having a unique firewall and flow control configuration.

[0093]   Another feature of the present invention when rules and trigger points are useful is when access is suddenly restricted to the Open IP Services Platform 30 itself. For example, a cable in the ground is cut by some construction activity. The Open IP Services Platform 30 can reconfigure itself based on the total available bandwidth that it sees. Thus, when a T1 line is cut, and the dial-up access becomes the only way to access the Internet, all users may be severely restricted, and yet enable vital services such as email. However, access to web servers behind the Open IP Services Platform 30 from the outside may have to be eliminated to ensure email access.

[0094]   Not only can access to outside networks be dynamically allocated, but it is also possible to perform access metering. Thus, if a tenant desires to be charged only for actual use of access to an outside network, this can be done.

[0095]   It is important to realize that the scenarios

described above are available only because all of the network functions are disposed within a single network switching node device that can reconfigure itself on the fly.

5   **[0096]**   The specification above is specifically addressed to the novel aspects of the hardware and software integration of third party network cards. However, it is mentioned that COREVISTA WEB(TM) is also considered a novel aspect of the invention, as is the

10   unique database structure that enables the configuration software to function with and configure all the third party network cards that are disposed within the Open IP Services Platform 30. However, all of the functionality of these other novel aspects of the invention are not

15   required for the invention to function. What is important is that a common SQL database structure be provided that enables each network function to be controlled thereby. Regarding the configuration software, it is only necessary that each network function be controlled by an ActiveX

20   module that is linked to an SQL database. Thus, a consistent interface to the actual network cards is provided. Furthermore, third parties can develop and

deliver their own ActiveX module for their network
component.

[0097]   By assigning each ActiveX module to its own SQL
database, each network component is able to have its own
5   password to its functionality. Therefore, an
administrator can have a unique password for each network
component, thereby allowing access to specific modules
without compromising the entire network configuration.

[0098]   The other advantage of SQL databases is that
10   each module can be controlled by a set of rules. These
rules can be manually triggered, or automatically
triggered by an event. The events can be time-based or
triggered by network conditions. Likewise, bandwidth
usage can be restricted when the demands outstrip the
15   available supply. These events can even trigger a call for
help to a system administrator or to another designated
party.

[0099]   This flexibility in control of the aspects of
the Open IP Services Platform enable unprecedented
20   opportunities. For example, a business can provide
Internet access to any other business in a building, thus
operating as a mini-Internet Service Provider (ISP).